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SUBJECT: BELGIANS SHARE U.S. CONCERN ABOUT VENEZUELA

REF: SECSTATE 154674

Classified By: Political Counselor Theodore H Andrews, Reasons 1.4 b and d

11. (C) The Belgian government shares USG concern about the current trend in Venezuela, the Director of the MFA's Latin America Division told polcouns on November 20, 2007. As a reflection of that concern, the Belgians have helped craft an EU statement expressing opposition to Chavez policies and urging a renewed commitment on his part to democratic norms. The plan was to issue the statement before the upcoming EU summit in December.

12. (C) Our Belgian contact said the statement "was not as tough" as it "could be," but that it "was a start." There was continuing pressure in the EU to maintain a dialogue with the Venezuelans, according to our source. Polcouns urged the Belgians to do all possible to make EU statements indicate clearly the organization's distaste for the Chavez regime.
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